



Virginia's Standards of Learning: At a Glance

Adopted by the Board of Education in June 1995 to set clear and concise expectations for student learning and achievement

- * Rigorous
- * Academic
- * Measurable
- * Clear and Understandable

Outline the *minimum* knowledge and skills which students should acquire in the four core areas of English, Mathematics, Science, and History and Social Science (History, Geography, Civics, and Economics), as they progress from kindergarten through the 12th grade

Contain computer technology learning standards which are intended to result in computer literacy for all students by the time they enter high school

Represent *minimum* curricular requirements

Developed through extensive public participation, including educators, parents, teachers, special interest groups, and the business community

- * Lead school divisions built consensus
- * More than 5,000 Virginians participated

Product of widespread public review through solicitation of comments by Board of Education

- * 30,000 draft copies distributed to the public
- * 10 public hearings statewide

Adoption followed by comprehensive information, training, and support activities

- * Distributed to all school divisions and interested groups and individuals
- * "Share Fairs" of resource information; Standards of Learning working sessions

The Commonwealth provided generous funding to local school divisions to support the implementation of the SOLs, including funds for materials, training, and student instruction

- * Fiscal Year (FY)97: \$6.2 million State match for teaching materials
- * FY97: \$55 million to support classroom technology
- * FY97-98 Biennium: \$6.6 million provided for the Early Reading Initiative for students to support K-5 reading SOLs;
- * \$6.7 million provided for Early Reading Initiative in FY99;
- * FY98-2000 Biennium: \$25.1 million for teacher training and staff development;
- * FY98-2000 Biennium: \$29.6 million for remedial instruction for students and teacher training; and
- * \$20 million provided to purchase graphing calculators and scientific probes to support Math and Science SOLs.



Virginia's Standards of Learning: A Closer Look

Virginia's SOLs are a Model for the Nation.

Virginia's new Standards of Learning are considered a model for the nation. Virginia is the only state to have received an "exemplary" rating in all four subjects from the American Federation of Teachers. The standards have been recognized for their completeness and their "clarity, detail, content, and precision." More than 20 other states have used Virginia's SOLs in some form or another as they develop their own standards.

The New SOLs Set Clear and Rigorous Expectations for Student Learning and Achievement.

In 1995 the Board of Education took the first step to raise expectations for a quality education for all Virginia's students by adopting rigorous new Standards of Learning (SOLs). The SOLs set clear and concise objectives for what teachers should teach and what students should know. They

represent a common body of essential knowledge and skills in four core academic areas: Mathematics, Science, English, and History and Social Science. They also include computer technology standards.

The Standards of Learning describe the academic content students should be able to master at each grade level, from kindergarten through Grade 12, as well as the skills and concepts to be attained by taking specific high school courses. The goals outlined in each content area focus on the application of this information in problem solving and day-to-day situations. The standards are a necessary benchmark for measuring student performance and achievement.

Developed with Participation from Diverse Groups

The SOLs were developed through extensive participation and scrutiny by educators and the public. More than 5,000 Virginians participated to build a consensus on what should be learned in Virginia schools. Lead school divisions worked with other school divisions, parents, teachers, professional organizations, the business community, and other special interest groups and individuals. Their task: propose standards which were rigorous,

academic, measurable, and written in plain and understandable language, that is, free of "ed school" jargon.

Each lead school division was assigned a subject area. The school divisions and the subjects were:

City of Virginia Beach Public Schools —
English

City of Newport News Public Schools —
History/Social Science

Fairfax County Public Schools —
Mathematics

Prince William County Public Schools —
Science

The initial draft of the SOLs was presented to the Superintendent of Public Instruction for review in September of 1994.



Board Initiates Widespread Public Review

The Board of Education received a draft of the SOLs at the January 1995 meeting, and initiated a comprehensive effort to receive public comments.

- ✦ 30,000 copies of the proposed standards document were distributed to the public.
- ✦ The draft standards were made available through the Virginia's Public Education Network (VAPEN).
- ✦ Ten public hearings were conducted across the state during February and March of 1995.

Workshops and Resource Fairs Provide Information after Adoption

The SOLs were adopted by the Board of Education at its regularly scheduled meeting in June 1995. In July, the SOLs were distributed to local school divisions as well as all other interested groups and individuals. On-going training and

support of the local school divisions for implementation of the standards through curricula reform, instructional changes, use of technology, and various teaching methods began. In 1996, four regional "Share Fairs" were organized by the Department of Education to review and interpret the Standards of Learning, and to provide opportunities for school division personnel to share model curricula. The following year opportunities for school divisions to review textbooks and other teaching materials were provided throughout the Commonwealth.

State Funding of Materials, Training, and Student Instruction for Implementation

Funding provided from the State in support of the implementation of the SOLs since adoption includes:

- ✦ \$55 million to support classroom technology in FY97
- ✦ \$6.2 million in State match for teaching materials in FY97

- ✦ \$25.1 million in teacher training and principal and superintendent staff development in the 1998-2000 biennium
- ✦ \$29.6 million for remediation instruction and teacher training in the 1998-2000 biennium
- ✦ \$6.6 million in FY97-98 to support early diagnosis of reading problems and follow-up services for all kindergarten and first grade students — the Early Intervention Reading Initiative (EIR)
- ✦ \$6.7 million in the 1998-2000 biennium to support EIR
- ✦ \$20 million to purchase graphing calculators and scientific probes and sensing device kits for local school divisions